PAULO CATARINO LOPES*

"And that holds him to be a bad Christian." How the image of the German community in Portuguese territory changed between the 15th and 16th centuries

"E que o tem por mau cristão". Como a imagem relativa à comunidade dos alemães estantes no território português mudou entre os séculos XV e XVI

This text is divided into three main parts: the first one concerns the image of Germans that prevailed in Portugal, particularly in Lisbon, before Martin Luther (1483-1546) – an Augustine monk and professor of moral theology at the University of Wittenberg – disseminated his *95 Theses*,[1] i.e., essentially in the 15th century up until around 1517. The second part pertains to the subsequent period up to the end of the 16th century. The third and last part is an attempt to critically reflect on how this transition established a new way of looking at Germans, who for Portuguese people ultimately became the religious *Other*.

* IEM – Instituto de Estudos Medievais, FCSH, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal. *E-mail:* peclopes@gmail.com.
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1 Original title: *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum* (*A Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences)*. Luther sent the Theses attached to a letter to Albert of Mainz, Archbishop of Mainz, on 31 October 1517, a date which is considered the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. The historicity of the act of preaching the 95 Theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg on Saturday, October 31, 1517, is controversial. In any case, the Theses were quickly reprinted, translated and distributed throughout Germany.

It should be noted that the first and second parts have already been addressed to varying degrees of depth by different authors. It is not, therefore, a new theme. So what especially interests us is the third part, which derives from the power play established between the first two.

While carrying out this brief reflection it is important to keep in mind that the cases referred to specifically involve Germans and not all the subjects of the vast Holy Roman Empire. And among the Germans, it is important to remember the division between Lower Germany (Hanseatic North) and Upper Germany, which, among other regions, includes Saxony, Bavaria and Austria.

Before Luther and Lutheranism

Germans were present in Portugal almost from the foundation of the nationality. Of course, they were to be found mostly in the German colony established in Lisbon, which revealed its importance at an early stage, as evidenced by the fact that from the late 13th century onwards it had its own chapel, dedicated to St. Bartholomew, at St. Julian's church in Lisbon.

In this context, the Hanseatics who had settled in Lisbon deserve special attention. In the 14th century a considerable group of German merchants, who were in some way connected to the trade practiced by the Hanseatic League,[2] was already established in the capital of the Portuguese kingdom to better develop their commercial businesses and contacts.[3] On the whole, it was already a community of considerable size whose importance was mainly due to the nature of its professional activities, which were of particular interest to the Portuguese crown. So much so that, at a given moment it justified the creation of an associative organisation capable of protecting and promoting its interests, capital and financial initiatives (in addition to the political issues always associated with Hanseatic investments, since although the Hanseatic League at its genesis was an association based essentially on trade, it represented at the same time a political union). Thus the *Brotherhood of St. Bartholomew* was created, and it was to experience a unique fortune in the Portuguese capital.[4]

At this point it is important to emphasise that trade was the main activity sought by the Germans in Portuguese territory during medieval times and the 16thcentury.[5]

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2 "The Hansa or Hanseatic League resulted from the fusion of two founding concepts: that of associating commercial cities and that of a community of German merchants encompassed by a common commercial right. The Hansa, a group of cities in northern Germany which were interested in commercial trade with the whole of Europe and thus enjoyed privileges it was indistinctly granted, emerged as a well-established entity in the mid-14th century." In Marques 1993, 15-16.

3 The existence of Hanseatics established in Portugal, i.e. those having permanent or continuous residence for a long time (the Hanseatic colony in Portugal), should not be confused with the sporadic – or even frequent, but without actual continuity – passage of subjects of the Holy Roman Germanic Empire interested in commercial trade with the Portuguese kingdom. Marques 1993, 100-129.

4 Marques 1993, 100-129. The actual date of the Fellowship's creation is unknown.

5 Rau 1984, 203-225.

But similarly to what occurred in Scandinavia the settlement of the Hanseatics in Portugal met with resistance from Portuguese merchants because German financial power and commercial ambitions were great. All Hanseatic traffic was carried out by Germans aboard German ships and under the guidance of German companies. Therefore, the power wielded by this community was not surprising. And if the crown welcomed its presence because of the evident advantages it contributed in terms of international trade, local merchants held the opposite view, given the competitive imbalance that it caused – much of it due, it should be emphasised, to the privileges the royal government established in its favour and which was manifest with great impact on plans like the customs barriers. The German penetration of Portuguese markets and society was as obvious as it was growing, and Portuguese economic protectionism was a reality limited to the local merchants themselves.

In the reign of King John I (1385-1433) the commercial activity of the Germans in Lisbon was so important that the German merchants thought it necessary to establish a permanent factor, as the English had, who could represent them before the authorities and defend their legitimate interests. This before 1433, Afonso Bernardes was simultaneously appointed by royal charter as procurator of the Germans and the Flemish, as well as representative of the English merchants. This appointment was confirmed by royal charter when King Duarte ascended to the throne (1433), and later by King Afonso V (1439).[6]

The legal documents used in any way to favour or *assist* the German community in Portugal were firstly a (royal) charter of privilege – undoubtedly the most important one – and then a record of marriage with a native of the kingdom, naturalisation letters and letters of security (or letters of royal security).

Legitimised by the highest power in the kingdom, these mechanisms enabled the beneficiaries to enjoy all the privileges, freedoms, graces, favours and exemptions held by the natives of the kingdom, in addition to exclusive advantages such as certain customs exemptions.[7]One such example is the case of Simon Seiz, who, in 1503, obtained a letter of comprehensive privilege for the German trading companies, which could import silver, copper, tar and masts without paying taxes. They generally had priority in all customs matters and could choose an agent to represent their common business interests. In the following year they were granted a private judge through whom the Germans became free from Portuguese jurisdiction. This post was most appropriately named *corregidor of the Germans*.[8]

6 Marques 1993, 100-129; Rau 1984; Schickert & Denk 2010, 16-26.

7 Rau 1984. On the privileges of the Germans in Portugal, see also Amaral 1965; Denucè 1909, VII: 310-319 and 377-392; Pohle 2015, 3, 19-38; Rau 984, 67-82; Ribeiro 1917; Schickert & Denk 2010, 16-41; Silveira 1958; Trindade 1981, 209-230.

8 Schickert & Denk 2010, 16-26.

The *letters of privilege* also granted the right to use weapons, without suspension by royal order to the contrary, as well as permission to discharge various duties.

In regard to individual guarantees, the *security letters*, for instance, granted those who possessed them the certainty that their goods would not be seized and that no embargo or reprisal would be imposed on them even if the king were at war with their native country.[9]

A prime example of how these *extraordinary* benefits could be particularly well accepted lies in the 1425 confirmation by royal charter of the important right to bury the members of the German colony who died in Lisbon in the space belonging to the chapel of the Brotherhood of St. Bartholomew.

Furthermore, if the privileges were normally granted for a period of 15 years, they were subject to renewal before the expiry date.

Naturally, with the improvement of living conditions in the host kingdom there was an ever-growing number of German workers, particularly merchants and craftsmen (bookbinders, clerks, blacksmiths, bridle makers, goldsmiths, furriers, shoemakers, coopers, tapestry makers and glaziers, among others). Lisbon, due to its exponential growth, was the most sought-after destination.

Portugal also benefited from all this activity, as demonstrated by the conditions under which imports and exports were negotiated once the privileges were granted. Moreover, the Portuguese kingdom needed German craftsmen, particularly the knowledge and experience they brought with them in areas that were still very scarce in Portugal's economy and technology.

From the perspective of governance, the abovementioned legal instruments fulfilled their function quite effectively. The best proof was, in fact, the continuous growth of the German community in the kingdom's main city throughout the Lower Middle Ages. This gives full meaning to Virginia Rau's claim that "foreign merchants were always well received by the public authorities in Portugal."[10]

Apart from trade and crafts, the areas of activity with the largest influx of German experts were banking and war. Some noteworthy names among bankers included the Welsers (the first to set up a factory in Lisbon) and the Fuggers, who went so far as to create establishments to represent them in Lisbon. Other leading commercial companies were Hochstetter, Imhof and Hirschvogel.[11]

The activity of German printers in Portugal is also especially worth mentioning. In effect, in the late 15th and particularly during the 16th century, the kingdom's capital witnessed the important and influential presence of German printers whose contribution to the introduction of the press in Portugal was decisive. Valentim Fernandes was

9 Rau 1984.

10 Rau 1984, 203.

11 On the origins and installation in the Portuguese capital of all these factories and their respective German commercial houses, consult Pohle 2007, I: 61-74.

undoubtedly the most distinguished among them. However, other names worthy of note were Nicholas of Saxony, João Gerling, Hermann de Campos, Jacob Cronberg and João Blávio.[12] It should be emphasised that in addition to being a printer, Valentim Fernandes was also a navigator and notary for the German merchants established in Lisbon.[13]

This transversality and flexibility in their professional activity or activities was, in fact, a characteristic that was much appreciated in the Germans living in Portugal. They bought and sold products, made loans to the crown, financed sea expeditions and a wide and diverse range of crafts, so the German community in Portugal was very much present in multiple sectors of the Portuguese economy and society.

In short, all this helps to understand the reasons why, since the 15th century, Germans were granted a number of privileges which, as we have seen, ranged from certain tax exemptions to a variety of favours. One typical example is that they could not be called up as servants or for the military service. The high point of this process took place at the beginning of the second half of the 15th century, when the German colony finally gained the necessary influence at Court to obtain a general charter of privileges for its Nation – the environment, even internationally, was very conducive to this important concession, as demonstrated by the marriage of Princess Leonor (1434-1467), sister of King Afonso V, to the Holy Emperor Frederick III (1415-1493) in 1452.[14]

The privileges of the German community were not limited to legal security. They included, for instance, relief from the ever-pressing and often relentless arbitrariness of royal officials. Their property and assets were protected from the threat of confiscation and their dwellings could not be offered as accommodation to anyone.

Privilege means exception and, consequently, advantage. The exceptions to common law granted to the German nation, as well as to a whole group of foreign nations, not only gave them legal security. Specifically in terms of commerce, the rights of power of attorney were facilitated and they were granted privileges for loading and unloading, transhipment and re-export, among other benefits. Due to this commercial advantage, a growing number of traders were attracted to Lisbon.[15]

There were also privileges of a civil and religious order. In fact, the Portuguese monarchs granted the German community freedom of worship in their homes and ships, their own cemeteries and, for knowledge of their causes, private custodian judges.

The intention was to publicly manifest the royal power's total guarantee of physical protection to German merchants and craftsmen, as well as their economic activities and material possessions. They were therefore valuable privileges in that they ensured and required ever-vigilant protection for German traders.

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12 On the subject of the German printers in Portugal, consult Dias 2007, 75-82; Dias 1998, V: 489-504; Dias 1995, 15-27; Braga 2002, 93-97.

13 Marques 1993, 97-129.

14 Marques 1993, 97-129.

15 Schickert & Denk 2010, 16-26.

Another factor with high social impact was that they were allowed to ride mules with saddles. This was a special privilege because at the time riding was a privilege granted only to the aristocracy.

For example, the Germans were granted 16 letters of privilege by King Manuel I alone.[16] In the meantime, the Portuguese discoveries were turning Lisbon into centre of world trade. It was a significant urban centre with a long commercial tradition dating back to the Muslim period, and which henceforth became the axis of transcontinental ocean routes. So it is not surprising that towards the end of the 15th century the great commercial and merchant houses of southern Germany – more specifically Augsburg and Nuremberg – began to show great interest in the capital of the peripheral kingdom of Portugal.[17]

The Portuguese policy of attracting foreign merchants, particularly Germans, by means of ever-growing privileges or laws therefore reflected the economic reality of the time: to attract capital and promote the opening of European markets within the more general context of the Portuguese discoveries.

Naturally, as in other parts of Europe where the German community intensified its presence, particularly in connection with Hanseatic trade, this resulted in growing protests by the local population, especially at the courts and at the turn of the 15th to the 16th centuries (e.g. the Lisbon Courts of 1498, in which the people asked the king not to allow the permanent residence of foreigners in the kingdom[18]).These protests, despite the privileges and benefits that were granted, suggested repercussions in the coexistence between the Portuguese and German communities, including in legal terms. This can be seen from the attitude of the city of Lisbon, which in 1460 witnessed the arrival of large numbers of foreigners, including Germans, who were to establish themselves as goldsmiths. The issue was that they used counterfeit gold and silver, "of which thing the people complain very much." As a result, King Afonso V ruled that no foreigner could open a goldsmith's shop without first paying a security deposit, in addition to other conditions related to the quality of the materials themselves.[19]

As we can see, the way the Germans were viewed varied between the highest Portuguese society, in particularly the crown, and the rest of society, namely their Portuguese competitors in their working fields. Within this context, special mention must obviously be made of trade and the Portuguese professional and social groups involved in it.

Portuguese merchants feared Nordic competition and naturally envied the privileges that the Germans enjoyed. On the one hand, they did not benefit from the same exemptions from tax or customs duties; on the other, the fact that their capital was considerably smaller immediately put paid to any initiatives they might plan while affording the Germans much larger profits.

16 Braga 2002, 93-97; Rau 1984; Schickert & Denk 2010, 16-26.
17 Schickert & Denk 2010, 16-26.
18 Dias 1995.
19 Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa (AML), *Posturas*, Cód. 834, doc. no. 2.

This situation was first exacerbated after Ceuta was seized in 1415, with the programme of discoveries towards the South Atlantic that was solidly supported by the crown; and then it irreversibly worsened with the discovery of the sea route to India (1497-1498).

Let us take, for instance, the case of the bombers and gunners. Portugal's expansion and status as the centre of the world's economy was not only profitable but also required large investments in shipbuilding and the development of weaponry capable of maintaining Portuguese supremacy in such distant shores. In late 1519 the treasurer of the Portuguese factory, Rui Fernandes de Almada (whose portrait was painted by Albrecht Durer and who corresponded with the great humanists of the time), set off on a long journey from Antwerp though Cologne, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Augsburg, Ulm and Munich. In addition to securing new contracts, his mission was to recruit experienced smelters and bombers to serve and teach their craft in Portugal. After all, it was better for the nation to manufacture firearms and create an industry of its own, rather than to import them. And Portugal additionally needed to arm its ships, a decisive factor in its expansionist policy.[20]

In fact, up until the mid-16th century the construction of cannons speeded up – a good example of this were the famous cannons known as *Falcons*. No European nation could afford not to follow this evolutionary process if it wished to maintain military equality. And the Germans were the great experts in this field.

Considering the spate of local protests, it was very important to the Germans that in 1509 the King granted them the additional privilege of "natives of the Kingdom", which afforded them the status of *national citizens* in various spheres and at same time implied that infringement of these orders by State officials would be punished with a large fine.[21]

With all this, we can see how Germans increasingly became an integral part of everyday life in Lisbon. They followed its pulse, they socialised (or coexisted) with its people and participated in its festivals and celebrations. In short, little by little they became inseparable from its development and growth. And all this was facilitated by one main factor: their faith, religious culture, sacred institutions and spiritual practices (rituals and symbols) were exactly the same.

And on the part of the Portuguese rulers there was an equal notion that the Germans represented a fundamental contribution to the greatness, internationalisation and cosmopolitanism of the kingdom, most particularly its capital. Extending the human context, it is not possible to think of Lisbon and its daily life at the turning point between the Middle Ages and Modernity without taking into account the presence of the "many and wild people" mentioned by Fernão Lopes in the prologue to the Chronicle of King Fernando.[22]

20 Schickert & Denk 2010, 27-41.
21 Schickert & Denk 2010,16-26.
22 Rau 1984.

After 1517

It is normally considered that it was only from 1536, when the Court of the Holy Office was introduced in Portugal, that there was a significant increase in vigilance towards the reformist winds of change of Lutheranism in Portugal. Even so, up until the 17th century there were few manifestations of Protestantism in Portugal. In fact, the arrival of the Inquisition, although it encompasses this issue, did not originate from a particular concern to eradicate the new heresy, which was held to be something distant. At the time, the great sources of anxiety were mainly crypto-Judaism and Islamism.[23]Not that Protestantism was a minor misdemeanour to the court; quite the contrary. It was simply that in the eyes of the religious authorities the limited dimension of the phenomenon did not warrant their in-depth attention.

However, it should be noted that despite the vigilance of the Catholic religious authorities, particularly the overseas Jesuits, Lutheran ideas were circulated and discussed in the kingdom as well as in the Empire. Correspondence from Asia from 1523 onwards, especially among Jesuits, contained a considerable amount of information concerning Lutheranism.[24]

Two classic examples of this state of affairs are João de Barros's expressive words in an evocative passage from *Ropica Pnefma*, published in 1532, as well as a certain passage in the correspondence of Father Belchior Nunes Barreto, Provincial of the Jesuits in India, dated 7 December 1552 and sent from Baçaim.[25]

João de Barros recalls the presence of people in Lisbon who "speak as freely as if they were in Germany at Luther's debates."[26]

Father Belchior Nunes Barreto, in a letter sent from India in December 1552, mentioned that,

> I met some Lutherans here who, on the pretext of being bombers, have come to sow their heresies, and this is a very dangerous thing in these parts, so steps should be taken to warn those whose function concerns this, not to allow Flemings, Englishmen, Germans or Frenchmen to come here, because we know many of them to bein with the Moors, and others are full of ideas transmitted by the Lutheran sect. Our Lord granted that I should know, from the practices I had with them, who they were and their opinions. I had them arrested and sent to the bishop. At the moment I do not know how matters stand. One of them was so clever and subtle in sowing his heresies that he can do much harm, and I am afraid that he has already done it to many and would do more, were he not prevented.[27]

In sum, it is an unequivocal fact that Lutheran thinking was known and debated. People read forbidden books. They reflected about and analysed its founding topics, like

23 Braga 2002, 93-97 and 219-262; Braga, 1997; Braga 2003, 99-208.
24 Braga 2002, 219-262.
25 About this topic, see Paiva 2011; Paiva 2005, 47-63; Paiva 2006; Paiva 2003, XV: 43-76.
26 Barros 1532, 2, 5.
27 Rego 1950-1952, V: 261-262.

sola fide and *sola scriptura*, the eschatology of the two places (Paradise and Hell) and non-ternary eschatology (i.e., leaving purgatory out of the equation), or the *Passion of Christ* as sufficient to liberate man so that good works are no longer necessary (they are important as *works*, but not decisive, i.e., they do not bring salvation; instead, in this context, they become sins). The centrality of the sacraments (except baptism and the Eucharist), fasting, the role of the saints as mediators, the veneration of relics, the Mass and the liturgy in Latin, worshipping images and the "business" of indulgences[28] were called into question.

The pope's authority, universal priesthood, clerical celibacy and the denial of the monastic universe were inevitably discussed, especially because they were the most controversial and therefore seductive. This is proved in 1520by the fears expressed by Miguel da Silva, second permanent ambassador to Rome and the future bishop of Viseu, to King Manuel I in a letter dated August 29.In this correspondence the ambassador emphasised that the Pope (Leo X) had promulgated the *Exsurge domine* bull against the Augustine monk for his thoughts, words and actions against the Catholic Church: "Against that friar from Germany Martin Luther, who created so many revolts there, now the pope has made a bull about which he laughs exceedingly, they say: this is something that makes one lose sleep because all those people ask for a council and for reformation."[29]

Issued by the Pontiff on 15 January 1520, this papal bull came in response to Martin Luther's 95 theses and the majority of his reformist writings. Of the 95 theses, Leo X recognised 54 as valid, but required Luther to retract the remaining 41, as well as other specified errors. Although the bull did not directly criticise all the points touched on by the then-monk Luther, it forbade all catholic countries from publishing, selling and reading any writings that contained the errors and heresies presented in the 95 theses, and asked the secular authorities to enforce the bull in their territories.[30]

The following year, more specifically on 23 March, the Pope sent a bull to King Manuel in which he expressed his fears about the possibility that Luther would disseminate his texts in Spain, from where they could easily reach Portugal. He then encouraged the king to take steps to prevent this.[31] On August 20, demonstrating that the Portuguese king had in some ways acted in harmony with the request of the leader of the Catholic Church, this same pope wrote to thank King Manuel for the strong opposition he had instituted against the expansion of the Lutheran heresy, exhorting him to continue with this mission.[32]

28 Braga 2002, 219-262.
29 Silva 1865, II: 33. On this matter, see Braga 1993, 39, 33-43.
30 On December 10, 1520, in a deeply symbolic act, Luther burned his copy of the bull together with the volumes of the Code of Canon Law.
31 Braga 1993, 33-43.
32 Sá 1983, 56-57.

On April 25 of the same year Rui Fernandes de Almada, a Portuguese diplomat serving precisely in Germany, wrote to King Manuel explaining the strongly reformist political-religious environment that prevailed there: "the pope wishes to dispatch no business with the Emperor but that this man [Martin Luther] be delivered to him arrested."[33] The Lutheran expansion in the north of the continent was a reality and the king needed to be duly informed of this danger.

These examples help us to understand the contents of the letter that King Manuel I in turn sent on April 11 to the Emperor Charles V, expressing his unease regarding the Lutheran movement. With particular emphasis, the Portuguese king drew attention to the danger of a religious division of their subjects, which would imply political division and consequently public disobedience. For this reason, he pointed out, one had to act with determination to "cut off and remedy this fire so kindled by the devil".[34]

For King Manuel I and in line with the pope's fears, the most urgent was indeed to limit the expansion of Lutheranism because ultimately the obedience of the population that comprised Christendom, including Portugal, depended on this.

For all these reasons, it is easy to conclude that since the earliest days of the Lutheran phenomenon the Portuguese crown guided its religious action within the territories of the kingdom with sincere concern for the risk incurred by Catholic orthodoxy.

The common people tended to debate controversial Lutheran issues in public places they frequented in their everyday lives, such as taverns, inns, fairs and communal squares – in short, places where public discussion was common practice. A prime example is the case mentioned by João Alves Dias about the young German, Lamberto Rustenius, a 25year-old merchant student who, after a lively conversation with others at a hostelry in Coimbra, was reported to the Holy Office by a Spaniard who was also present.[35]

The Inquisition was particularly concerned with the religious ideas of Germans residing in Portugal, where, although without much expression, Protestantism had been introduced at an early age owing to widespread contact with northern men in the context of overseas expeditions and the empire under construction. Naturally, given the high percentage of Germans who were members of the Brotherhood of St. Bartholomew, this organisation was watched with particular attention as a space potentially contaminated by heresy and at the same time a probable disseminator of Lutheran ideas. This evidenced by the frequency of the *accusations* of Lutheranism against the Brotherhood between the first case in 1541and the end of the 16th century.

The practice of the reformed religion among Lutherans residing in Portugal was very similar to that of the early Christians in their hostile pagan society, i.e., it functioned as a marginal practice carried out in the shadows of the authorities and of the prevailing

33 Barata 1971, 242. See also Braga 1993, 33-43.
34 Braga 1993, 43.
35 It is curious to note that many of the accusations of Lutheranism were made by foreigners. Dias 2007.

Church. As might be expected, the Germans who arrived in Portugal sought support from their compatriots, staying at their homes or at their inns and hostelries. The aim, as Isabel Drumond Braga points out, was to "benefit from the group's ties of sociability and solidarity".[36]

Within the colony of their fellow countrymen, according to João Alves Dias,

> due to the similarity of their customs and language, it was easier for them to socialise and adapt to a foreign country. Man always carries with him his own religiosity and way of thinking, which sometimes is in conflict with those of his host country. This was the case with many foreigners who arrived in Lisbon. Educated in a Europe that was the background of wars and conquests by new religious movements, accustomed to other worship practices, many of them found it difficult to adapt to that new country, where only one religion was officially true, accepted and practiced. And because of this religious intolerance, some elements of the German colony who settled in the Kingdom's capital had problems in adapting to Portugal.[37]

Of course, the great protagonists in the dissemination of the reformist message were books and the spoken word, as had already been happening since the end of the 14th century with the *Devotio Moderna* movement. Books, specifically, soon took on the role of the main manifestations of Protestant religious materiality – for instance, Luther's *95 Theses* (1517) and German *Bible* (1534),[38] in addition to all his other writings, notably *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* and *On the Freedom of a Christian*, all of which, in this order, were from1520.

Criticism of the prevailing orthodoxy essentially focused on anything that was not part of the biblical text. As the only sources of faith, when in the vernacular, the Gospels were the foundation on which all possible religiosity rested. Henceforth, the most important was the connection with the divine without interposing persons. Put another way, the interior dialogue between the believer and God now became the central point. Finally, the difference and distance between priests and faithful disappeared. The intimate Christian religion had come to stay.

By means of accusations, close surveillance or laxness on the part of those they targeted, the Portuguese religious authorities inevitably reacted. After all, however discreet or reserved they might be, the truth is that Lutheran (and in general, Protestant) ideas and practices were clearly opposed – to the point of provoking total clashes at moments of dispute and debate – to the premises espoused by local Catholics.[39]

But the people also carried out attacks against the merchant colonies of northern Europe.[40]

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36 Braga 1993, 255.

37 Dias 1998, 131.

38 This edition of the Bible translated into the vernacular, also known as *The Luther Bible*, has the particularity of being considered one of the main factors responsible for the evolution of the modern German language, thus extending its importance far beyond the religious and even political spheres.

39 Braga 1993, 219-262.

40 Oliveira 1998, 23, 103-112.

In the meantime, books and artistic materials that potentially disseminated protestant ideas were being watched. The harbours were especially targeted, for the merchants' social group was seen as the main propagating agent of the new heretical message.

In sum, all these cases show the growing zeal in surveillance and consequently the existence of a general concern with orthodoxy.

The great majority of those accused of Protestantism in Portugal were foreigners residing or episodically settled in the kingdom, as with the abovementioned merchants. Among them, the Germans, the English and the Dutch were naturally those who most concerned the Portuguese religious authorities.[41]

Gerhard Schickert, Thomas Denk, Paulo and Isabel Drumond Braga, as well as João Alves Dias, studied several cases of Germans prosecuted by the Portuguese Inquisition.[42] This gallery enables us to visualise the way and incidence with which the Germans were persecuted.

As Isabel Drumond Braga reveals in her table on the foreigners prosecuted for Protestantism in Portugal between 1536 and 1700, out of a total of 248 accused there were 29 Germans (23 in Lisbon, 4 in Évora and 2 in Coimbra).[43] In fact, approximately two decades after the establishment of the Holy Office in Portugal, vigilance and repression of local and foreign Protestants had visibly increased. And the Germans merited special care, as was suggested by the watchful eye kept on the bombers serving on Portuguese ships.

Accusations were made for multiple reasons. However, what should be remembered is the importance of the Germans' professional success, particularly the merchants who enjoyed special privileges in the society where they had settled. If we add envy and jealousy to the fanaticism for orthodoxy that was often inflamed by the clergy, we can understand the phenomenon of delation. After all, religion had a central place in people's daily lives, and the Catholic authorities already had a long tradition of intolerance towards the religious *Other.*[44]

In this context, the Lutheran Germans (specifically these, since many were Catholics) who lived in Portugal necessarily had to adopt a religious posture that was as discreet as possible. However, this was not always the case,[45] giving rise to various accusations and prosecutions. Against this background, throughout the 16th century and even later the Brotherhood of St. Bartholomew emerges as a singular paradox, i.e., a Catholic corporation most of whose members were surely Protestant.[46]

41 Braga 1993, 219-262.
42 Dias 1998; Schickert & Denk 2010, 16-41; Braga 1993, 219-262; Braga 1997.
43 Braga 2002, 244.
44 Braga 2002, 219-262.
45 Dias 1998.
46 Schickert & Denk 2010, 16-41.

Enveloped in Catholic ritual and symbolism like the veneration of saints and the conferral of the sacraments, the religious year in the chapel of St. Bartholomew was determined by Rome's festive calendar, in whose ceremonies it actively participated. Furthermore, daily life in the Fellowship, both in terms of religious practices and of temporal administration, also had a Catholic base. This is evidenced by the religious parades and processions organised by the institution and which in 1582 reached their symbolic pinnacle with the presence of Philip II himself.[47]

The image changes, but not relations at the level of the crown

Lutheranism circulated in the Portuguese kingdom and empire mainly through foreigners, particularly German and Flemish merchants and navigators. This fact unequivocally reveals the central dimension of these figures who, through their contact with the Portuguese, provided them with knowledge and debate about the new reformist ideas that set Catholic Christianity on its road to irreversible rupture – something that had never been seen before then. Through these northern Europeans, heterodox Lutheran proposals and possible new paths for Christian religiosity and spirituality were discussed.

For the purposes of our reflection we are interested in the case of the Germans, whose image in Portugal underwent a profound change in the first half of the 16th century. However, the effects of this change were limited to the religious field (in this context, the introduction of the Inquisition in Portugal facilitated and encouraged people to report all those who deviated from religious orthodoxy, and consequently established religious intolerance) and, above all, to day-to-day relations with certain socio-professional groups.

In effect, in practical terms this mutation was mainly circumscribed to the religious sphere, where a vigilant attitude sometimes prevailed to the point of absolute mistrust. In other words, views and religious attitudes towards Germans inevitably changed, but not behaviour regarding the economic dimension (particularly of the commercial sphere) in most circumstances deeply associated with the political dimension. There are several examples that prove this and they almost always come from the top of Portuguese society, i.e., from the crown.

As we pointed out, the common people generally viewed these foreigners with suspicion and even as adversaries because of the many privileges they enjoyed (at least from the late 14th century). The prosperity of the German merchants, for example, was seen as a factor that disturbed the good existence of locals.

This scenario was greatly exacerbated by the emergence of the Lutheran phenomenon and the subsequent religious Reformation. After all, from this moment on the presence of German "heretics" (even though most of them were staunch Catholics) called into question not only the economy but also the customs and the very religion of the

47 Schickert & Denk 2010, 16-41.

kingdom. Naturally, by means the last two spheres – which were after all mere pretexts – the intention was to correct the first, which in practice was actually the most important.

The courts of 1525 and 1535, for example, clearly demonstrated how badly the kingdom's population was reacting to the presence of the foreigners, particularly those who held good socio-economic positions. As Isabel Drumond Braga points out, "it was requested of King John III not to grant posts in justice, ship captainships, governorships, fortress captainships, high offices in the kingdom, the royal household or estate to foreigners, even if they had the privileges of native countrymen."[48] But King John III's response to the demands of the people was negative, which clearly reveals the position of the crown.

This brings us to the essential point of this reflection: despite the strong pressure that undoubtedly existed, this was not enough to change the royal position, particularly in political and economic terms, vis-a-vis the German community in Portugal. For example, this was true in spite of King Manuel's abovementioned warnings against the dangers of Lutheran ideas at the very beginning of their emergence.

The fact is that at the right moment, reality – or the *actual truth of things*, according to the thinking of Machiavelli (1469-1527)[49] – overlapped with what *should be*. Faced with the real needs of the empire to be maintained, the pragmatic aspect won the day. So it is no surprise that the German community consistently continued to be granted privileges for their Nation.[50]This can be seen, for instance, in the pardons they received for offenses committed in Portuguese territory.[51]

With King John III, and already with King Manuel, Portugal imported from Germany not only textiles and luxury goods, but also artillery, ammunition, copper, tin and lead, which were necessary to produce weapons. Portugal's overseas ambitions were therefore highly indebted to the production and trade of the Germans.

In 1529, for example, the bombers' corps was placed under the protection of the *Civil Corregidors*, i.e., the Supreme Court of Lisbon, in all civil and penal matters. King John III thus generally followed the diplomatic course of his father and predecessor King Manuel I, keeping up his policy of good neighbourliness – particularly economic – with the Habsburgs and the German citizens who lived in Portugal.[52]

All this was in addition to the so-called *Privilege of the Germans*, which, according to Virginia Rau and Maria Valentina Cotta do Amaral, was the most coveted privilege among foreign merchants. In fact, this broad and unique privilege simply surpassed

48 Braga 1993, 219-262.

49 Maquiavel 2008. Book written in 1513, but whose first edition was published posthumously in 1532. See on the pertinence of this principle in the thought of Machiavelli and in the reality of the time the following texts: Bec 1987, 9-44; De Grazia 1990.

50 Rau 1984; Silveira 1958.

51 Braga 2003, 31-47. Special attention to note 7 of this article, which presents a large bibliography on the subject (34-35).

52 Pohle 2007.

the rights and freedoms granted to merchants from other nations who had settled in Portugal. The Hansa merchants in particular began to enjoy these advantages precisely from 1517.[53]

Final notes

In summary, at the dawn of the 16th century – i.e., in the transition from medieval times to modernity – after the Protestant Reformation initiated by Martin Luther, the image of Germans and of Germany itself underwent a profound change in Portugal. This change was continuously fuelled by the constant and irreversible development of Protestantism. But this mutation, which was visible in the everyday life of the common Portuguese people as well of the political elites (who viewed it with concern) and the cultural elites (the characteristic cases of Damião de Góis and the professors of the College of Arts of Coimbra – Fernão de Pina e Friar Valentim da Luz – show the Portuguese intellectual circles' affinity with some of the reformist theses), did not lead to an absolute change in the relationship between the German settlers in Portugal and the top echelons of Portugal's governmental hierarchy.[54]

Despite all the transformations that disrupted Europe in the first half of the 16th century, the fact is that the economy was and continued to be one of the great foundations of Portugal's relationship with the German people. A relationship of neighbourliness that came from the two previous centuries and which, both here and there, should continue to be *well* fuelled, on the one hand, due to the ever-growing needs associated with the maintenance of the Portuguese overseas empire, and, on the other hand, to the almost constant urgency of supplying the realm with certain commodities which Portugal was decidedly unable to produce in the necessary quantity. This situation was exacerbated after Seville became the centre of the world's economy.[55]

This was the case at the top, because at the bottom things were happening differently for the reasons explained above and which particularly affected social groups like the merchants and artisans, i.e. the fields where the Germans were strong and definite competitors. Here, the practical necessity resulting from everyday life and community life was combined with aspects of religion and customs. The result was a reaction based on distrust and vigilance which suggested the birth of an alterity where it had not previously existed (there were differences of an economic, professional and social nature, but not at this much deeper level).

It is unmistakable that with Luther – and later with Zwingli (1484-1531) and Calvin (1509-1564) – Europe witnessed the emergence of a new platform of alterity within itself, this time between North and South. Southern Europeans slowly began to see

53 Amaral 1965; Rau 1984.
54 Braga 2003.
55 Pohle 2007.

northern Europeans as the religious *Other*, even though they were Christian; as different and strange, to the point of becoming declared opponents and, therefore, targets to be urgently suppressed.

But on the other hand, it asked Christians (in the broad sense) a question that was as intimate as it was foundational: what does being a Christian really mean? After all, it is though the emergence of the *Other* that I have the possibility of forming a judgment on myself as on an object. In this context, the problem of assessing the *Other* arises in full, since the knowledge of this *Other* (and of the *Self*) is always obtained through analogical reasoning: I know the other by analogy with myself (interpersonal communication is fundamentally based on a dialogue that safeguards the *Self* and the *You* as subjects, as people). Portugal, although it was distant from the centre of Europe, did not escape this cultural and mental phenomenon: this hard transition established a new way of perceiving the Germans.

In another aspect, it can be seen from the various cases put forward by the above-mentioned researchers that appraisals of German Protestants – henceforth regarded as the religious *Other*, let us not forget – are always carried out by means of a comparative analysis with the Portuguese, the *good* Christians. The referential system in question thus contemplates a level of antithetical apprehension that opposes Portuguese/Catholics and Germans/Protestant, granting the Portuguese the status of the true foundation of the system that assesses that *Other.* Of course, this confrontation favours the Portuguese as Catholics and *true* believers.

This analogical reasoning has two levels, a superficial one and a deeper and more complex one. The assessment done by the Portuguese in the time (16th century) and space (Portuguese territories) in question remained at the first level, i.e., the one in which the knowledge of the religious *Other* is based more on spontaneous communication, on the sympathy/antipathy duality and on intuition, rather than on reflective knowledge, i.e., the deep analysis of their behaviour (in the route of Erasmus, an example of this second case would be the one provided by Damião de Góis[56]).

In other words, the cultural references of the Portuguese constituted a code that included diverse classifications and values, namely those of religious orthodoxy. And it was based on this referential code that the German *Others* living in Portugal, when they were Lutheran (and often even when they were not), was valued or devalued by the locals.

The inevitability of the cultural shock and inability of the Portuguese (in the broad sense) to open up and dialogue with the religious *Other* becomes clear. After all, it is essential to distinguish between perception of the *Other* and knowledge of the *Other*. The first is immediate; the second is markedly reflective. The result was the contemporaneous

56 Aubin 1979-1980; Bataillon 1938; Bataillon1983; Bataillon et al. 1982; Dias 1960, I; Marques 1987, 33-70; Torres 1982.

impossibility of understanding the authentic *Other* as alterity, as difference. The reason for this was the prevailing subjectivity that functioned as a foundation throughout the discourse included in the cases put forward.[57]

Nevertheless, despite the constant threat and vigilance resulting from the impossibility of open-mindedness towards the difference in question, which often imposed a wary cautiousness, Portugal and particularly Lisbon were inhabited by many Germans "who lived, married and sometimes were happy here."[58] This is further proof of how powerfully the Portuguese discoveries and expansion must have attracted its contemporaries.

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57 Dias 2007; Schickert & Denk 2010, 16-41; Braga 2002, 219-262; Braga 1997.

58 Dias 2007, 139.

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